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## WHITHER THE WAR CORRESPONDENT?

BY

COLONEL TIM L. M. PORTER

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This study will examine these relationships, starting with a historical review of recent small wars in order to identify some of the many, varied issues that can arise. The impact of the media on public opinion will be examined and the study will further discuss problems of: accreditation, access to, and security of, operational information; information gathering and transmission facilities; censorship and disinformation; the realistic or sanitised coverage of conflict; and the use of "arm-chair experts" to analyse and predict future military operations.

The study will only consider the problem as it affects the reporting of small wars, which will be defined, and will finally discuss ways in which the potential difficulties may be prevented or at least minimised.

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WHITHER THE WAR CORRESPONDENT ?

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

Colonel Tim L.M. Porter

Professor Gary L. Guertner  
Project Adviser

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U.S. Army War College  
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## ABSTRACT

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## WHITHER THE WAR CORRESPONDENT ?

### CHAPTER I

#### INTRODUCTION

Long before Phillipidae completed his epic run from the battlefield of Marathon to report the Greek victory over the Persians in 490 BC wars had been reported by other, if slower means. However, it was not to be until the middle of the nineteenth century that the war correspondent, and thus war reporting as we understand it today, became a reality.

Until the Crimean War the world had largely relied upon despatches from commanders in the field, and the problems of communications ensured that most of those reports never reached the public until long after the events that they described had occurred. King George III would undoubtably have had to wait for a month or more to learn of the defeat of Cornwallis and his forces at Yorktown; and there would have been little critical analysis or debate about that surrender except in Parliament, because the public in general, at least outside the major cities, had no way of being informed - or at least not in a timely manner. How different things might have been given the modern communications and mass media of the twentieth century and an informed and critical public.

Howard Russel's reports from the Crimea heralded the dawn of a new age - the age of the war correspondent. His frank, vividly

descriptive despatches for The Times introduced the public to the horrors, heroism, confusion and occasional incompetence of war. A decade later the power of both pen and photograph were to bring the American Civil War into stark focus for the public. Increased public awareness and genuine concern over the nature of a war that was setting brother against brother, coupled with the twin pressures of profit and competition, led newspapers throughout the United States to enlist the services of war correspondents, and for their editors to analyse the actions of political and military leaders alike in their prosecution of the war. Never again would the military be able to conduct their battles and campaigns without close public scrutiny, and never again would politicians be able to maintain or prolong wars effectively without the support of the public. Increasingly public opinion was to be coloured by the views expressed in the press, and more recently in radio and television coverage of conflict.

Experiences since World War II have demonstrated that there are misunderstandings between the three key parties involved in war reporting - governments; the military; and the media - and that these misunderstandings can cause severe difficulties if they are not understood and overcome. These difficulties, and the power of the press to influence public opinion have been apparent in every conflict since 1945, and perhaps especially so during; the Korean War; the Suez Crisis; the Vietnam War; the Falklands Conflict; and the United States' led invasion of Grenada. The problems were found to be so

severe during the Falkland Conflict that there was a subsequent Parliamentary Inquiry, and similar inquests have been held in the United States following both Vietnam and Grenada. The problem is not yet resolved.

The key difficulty is that all three parties have different requirements, aims, and perceptions of their own, and each other's role. It is exacerbated by the rapid and accelerating ability of the media to reach out to the public and to bring conflict into the home as it happens, and in full colour reality.

The military have the most straightforward position. In peacetime they have realised that they need to understand the media and to use all of their elements sensibly if they are to;

"Convince their critics, amongst them intellectuals and journalists whose influence on the young cannot be over-estimated, of the relevance of their task and the reality of the threats they exist to meet." (1)

Sadly, this improved peacetime understanding, which works both ways, has seldom translated readily in wartime, when the military seek security and, in particular, absolute secrecy for their future operations.

In contrast to the military, governments have the most complex position. They must establish and maintain public support for the war. They wish to maintain security, and they may, at times, be tempted to use the media for propaganda or disinformation. In addition, as part of their determination to maintain public support, they may wish to conceal, or at least play down, bad news from the war zone. For the same reasons governments may wish the media to present a sanitised picture

of war, rather than one of stark, bloody reality. All of these issues lead to the critical question of how much governments should seek to control the access that correspondents, and other media personnel, have to information and how much they should seek to control the subsequent media output.

The media position will of course vary between individual newspapers and magazines, between different radio and television stations, and between individual reporters, cameramen, editors, and commentators. In general:

"The media in our society, as well as informing, see themselves as having a multiple role as watchdogs, judges and independent observers of events. They believe it is to the people, not the government, that they are ultimately accountable, and it is for this reason that it is so important both the government and the services are seen to their freedom, interest and enquiry." (2)

In truth, one of the basic tenets of a democratic society is freedom of the press, and its existence largely depends upon there being an informed public, which is in possession of the facts, and is able to make considered judgements, particularly on matters of national importance. The power of the media to inform and to shade public opinion must not be underestimated.

Examination of the relationships between the media, the military, and governments in recent conflicts show that the different needs of each group, and thus their motives for certain actions towards each other, are poorly understood. This has led to major difficulties and to ever more vigorous efforts to find solutions that will allow these three unnatural bed-fellows to work in harmony, and to the common

good in future.

This paper will briefly examine the nature of the media, before studying the relationships between the military, the media, and governments in light of experiences gained during the Vietnam War, the Falklands Conflict, and the invasion of Grenada. The way in which future technological developments in the communications field may affect this relationship will be addressed. The paper will conclude with a discussion of some possible ways of overcoming the strains and difficulties of the relationships between all three parties in the future.

The paper will only consider the problem from a British and United States point of view, and against a background of future "small wars". "Small wars" are understood to include all low intensity operations, other than counter-terrorism. Whilst no specific scenarios are postulated, the setting of any small war is assumed to be within a non-industrialised, relatively unsophisticated area, as was in fact the case in each of the historic examples that will be discussed. The issue of censorship will not be addressed specifically.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Brigadier DW Scott-Barrett, "The Media, Conflict and the Armed Services", Seaford House Papers 1970, p.102.
2. Ibid.

## CHAPTER II

### THE NATURE OF THE MEDIA

The all-embracing word media has been used frequently within this paper already and indeed, is in universal usage today. However, it means different things to different people; in addition it is often used in a perjorative sense, without the user specifying exactly what is meant. In reality there is no such corporate whole as the media. It includes the press, which is itself extremely diverse, as well as news agencies and radio and television. The point is well made by Richard Halloran:

"There is no such thing as 'the media', no lockstep, all-encompassing institution, any more than there is 'the military', or the 'military mind'. For one thing, media is plural, not singular. The media include an almost breathtaking diversity of channels of information." (1)

Some of these diverse, disparate elements that collectively make up the media merit brief examination, if their relationships with the military and governments are to be understood and improved upon.

#### THE PRESS

The press is the oldest element within the media family; perhaps it is also the most diverse. It includes: daily and weekly newspapers; as well as weekly, monthly and quarterly journals and magazines. Newspapers themselves range from major national newspapers to small circulation, local ones. In the United Kingdom, and elsewhere in Europe, the major national newspapers tend to be more politically biased than those in the United States, and thus the weight given

to any particular news item may vary from paper to paper, as may the reader's understanding of the issues vary as a result. Weekly newspapers, in common with magazines and periodicals, have more time to allow for analysis and comment upon news items. All newspapers and magazines generally include not only straightforward news coverage but also feature articles and commentaries, which may well contain critical analysis of that news, and also editorial leaders that comment upon it. Within the overall constraints of editorial and proprietorial guidelines, reporters, columnists and analysts will inevitably make conscious, or unconscious, use of their own background experience and personal views to shade their articles and reports.

This is not to say that the press is always, or even often, distorted or inaccurate, or as some critics claim, deliberately misleading. A report is not necessarily untrue simply because the reader neither likes nor agrees with it. Chapman Pincher, a much respected investigative journalist, has described the problem as follows:

"It is a common misbelief that journalists distort and even fake their reports to make them more sensational. I have found little truth in this...the offending writer quickly becomes branded as dangerous.

It cannot be denied however, that many newspaper reports are inaccurate when judged by those who know something about the issue being discussed. Some degree of inaccuracy is inevitable by the very nature of journalism... the requirement to give the information in potted form, understandable to every reader, involves also - simplification.

Another source of inaccuracy is the reporter's difficulty in discovering what the truth really

is. Any journalist is only as good as his sources and these, however eminent, are sometimes misleading, occasionally deliberately so." (2)

All of this means that there is probably no single approach open to governments or the military that will produce the desired, harmonious relationships of itself. As in so many other fields, whilst much can be achieved in that way, it may be that the real solution, and best hope for improvement, lies at the personal level.

#### THE BROADCASTING MEDIA

The most recent addition to the media is television. It is arguable that it is also the medium of most direct impact on the greatest number of people. In the United States, in particular, television appears to have taken over from radio as the means of disseminating broadcast news and, because of the paucity of genuinely national newspapers, television news coverage also fills that void to a great extent. The impact is probably even greater in the United States, than in Britain, especially with the addition of Cable Network News. In Britain, whilst television is an extremely powerful medium, radio still has much appeal and offers comprehensive news coverage, as do the seven or eight national newspapers each of which has an extremely large circulation.

Television reaches out to vast audiences and the impact of coloured pictures, allied to on-the-spot reporting is inestimable. A major advantage for television news, compared to other forms of news dissemination, is its immediacy - sadly, that advantage can also become a drawback. Broadcast reports will frequently be live, and thus unedited, and the pressures of time and deadlines can lead to

inaccuracies. The television news producer's necessary philosophy of restricting time on any one item also dictates that the whole story will sometimes be forfeited for time. Of even more importance is, that once broadcast, television reports are very difficult to refute; attempts to do so are more likely to create a credibility problem for those charged with the rebuttal than for the authors of the original report. One further problem, that has been apparent in reporting conflict on television, but is not restricted solely to such reports, is the hazard of the instant opinion. Frequently members of government, or the military, will be required to give an immediate, live response to a report or event and the unforgiving public tends to regard any hesitancy, or caution as weakness or evasiveness.

The ability to broadcast live, or filmed reports from areas of conflict raises further questions: are there any topics or sights that should not be subject to the scrutiny of the television screen? Is it desirable, or right, to show the full horrors of war? Should the media present a sanitised picture of conflict? To amplify the point one only has to consider the overwhelming impact of the newsreel footage of Belsen concentration camp immediately following its liberation in 1945. Was it right to show such scenes or not? Most people would probably agree that in that case, such appalling inhumanity had to be made public so that the whole world would understand the nature of the worst excesses of the Nazi regime. Perhaps the decision is less straightforward in the case of coverage of one's own casualties in conflict. Whilst it is probably right - perhaps even slightly heroic - to show soldiers

being buried, or their caskets being returned to Andrews Air Force Base, is it also right to show those same soldiers bloodied and mutilated, lying where they fell? Certainly the latter image is accurate, and is probably compulsive television for some but, is it necessary desirable reporting and what is its impact on domestic public opinion? It is interesting to speculate on the effect that television coverage of the slaughter of World War I might have had on the duration of that war.

Whilst television is the most powerful conveyor of imagery, to the widest audience, the written word still has considerable strength, as does the black and white photograph. Consider the two remarkably evocative photographs that for many are still the most vivid images of Vietnam: Eddie Adams' photograph of the summary execution of a suspected Vietcong officer by General Loan; and the little Vietnamese girl running naked down the road at Tram Bang screaming with the pain of her napalm burns. These will be discussed further in Chapter III.

#### MEDIA POWER

Clausewitz held that his trinity of the government, the governed, and the military was central to the ability of a nation to wage war. Whilst the media would probably not replace the governed in his eyes today, there is no doubt that they do have considerable influence over public opinion. If proof of that influence is needed the recent Congressional 'volte face' on members' salaries is wholly convincing. This influence can be exerted, not solely

by what is published or broadcast, or the way in which those reports are slanted, but also by what is left unsaid. In a democratic society governments and the military rightly have little control over these matters, even in times of war, because freedom of the media is a central tenet of democracies. In the United Kingdom the media can still be silenced on particular issues by invoking the "D" notice procedures, and the Official Secrets Act remains in force. However, in general it is for the media to regulate itself, and to use its own judgement on what to print or broadcast, based upon their political and ethical positions. "Publish and be damned" is still perhaps the view that some have of the media, but they are of course liable to retrospective application of the normal laws of libel and slander. This raises the issue of ethics. The problem is, that whilst individuals will each have their own ethical standards, and some newspapers and broadcasting stations may have guidelines, the system relies upon humans - and they are frail. Like other institutions, the media are not entirely peopled by paragons of virtue and, it is therefore inevitable that they include within their numbers a few reporters, commentators, editors and others with lamentable personal standards. These people may colour their reports and, perhaps more importantly, call the integrity of the whole by the military into question. Resultant suspicion of the media as a whole by the military or by governments is a poor basis on which to build a relationship which will be subject to many other tensions in both peace and war.

## THE REPORTING OF WAR

The war correspondent is most frequently a reporter of events and impressions, rather than an interpreter of them. He will record both events as they occur and as he sees them happen - or has them reported to him - and also his impressions of the nature of the conflict. The analysis of those reports will generally be left to the specialist staff in the newspaper or broadcasting, company's offices, where they have the time and facilities to research the background and to seek the comments of experts as necessary.

The war correspondent himself will be close to the troops engaged in the conflict; he may even be living with them and sharing their hardships, dangers, disappointments and successes, as was the case with many correspondents during the Falklands War. It is inevitable that they will become caught up in the emotion of the moment under such circumstances, no matter how detached they may wish to be. As Christopher Wain, a leading television defence correspondent, has said:

"No matter how detached and impartial you may believe yourself to be, I defy anyone to sit through a heavy mortar or artillery barrage, or spend an hour cowering under sniper fire in a ditch and not feel a sense of identity with, and therefore a certain support for your fellow sufferers." (3)

Of course, situations will vary, and the circumstances in which war correspondents find themselves will be as varied as wars themselves. The following three chapters examine the very different experiences of Vietnam, the Falklands and Grenada, in an attempt to see how the relationships between the media, the

military and governments change as situations alter, and to try and identify common problems in order to seek ways to improve and maintain these relationships.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Richard Halloran, "Soldiers and Scribblers", Parameters Vol 17 (Spring 1987), p.12.
2. Chapman Pincher, Inside Story, p.210.
3. Christopher Wain, "Television Reporting of Military Operations - A Personal View", RUSI Journal, March 1974, p.72.

## CHAPTER III

### THE VIETNAM EXPERIENCE

Perhaps the Vietnam War has become the most comprehensively documented and discussed war in history. The library at the United States Army War College alone lists more than 330 different, unclassified books that have the word 'Vietnam' in their titles and thus deal directly with the American experience in that country, as well as many hundreds of other books on the war, and periodicals that include commentary about the conflict. A large number of these books discuss the part that the media played upon the Vietnam stage and, whilst many authors have tried to present a balanced picture, it is clear that they have found it difficult to be truly objective. The purpose of this chapter is not to re-open debates about the performance of the media in Vietnam, but rather to examine: the nature of the war and the nature of the media in what was the first war to be so widely reported by television; to discuss the effect that the media had upon public opinion and government thinking and policy; and to identify particular lessons which, when linked to other relevant experiences, may provide a guide to the establishment and maintenance of better relationships between the media, the military and governments in the future.

#### THE NATURE OF THE WAR

The Vietnam War was different. It was the longest and least successful foreign war ever conducted by the United States and, with the exception of the two World Wars, was also the costliest.

Furthermore, it probably caused the greatest national trauma since the Civil War. That it is still the subject of much, vigorous discussion is evidence of this. It caused great polarisation within communities and between the government and the people. It was a most unhappy experience for the military. For the Army, and for the other services to a lesser extent, it was a war of dynamic change on the battlefield in terms of equipment, technology and tactics, but it was also a cause of great concern and some resentment; resentment against the media, the government and, in some cases the public at home. Never before had the United States fought a war in which they had been successful in virtually every major battle but still lost the war, or in which public support for the efforts and sacrifice of their armed services had been so low. At one point morale within the Army was to reach a disastrously low level as the statistics for desertions, drug-taking, disobedience to orders, and 'fragging' show.

It was a war that never had full public support within the United States. That this was so was due in part to deliberate government attempts to conceal the true nature of the American involvement and to avoid a 'declaration of war' or partial mobilisation. It seems that there were times when considerable public support could have been aroused by such actions. However, of even greater importance was the general lack of understanding of why the United States was in Vietnam at all, and about the nature of communist insurgent warfare. All was exacerbated by the duration of the war - something that was outside modern American experience and that was particularly difficult for a nation that likes to have clearly

identified reasons to go to war, and for war to be prosecuted vigorously and brought to a speedy, successful conclusion. It is probably a truism that only wars of national survival or liberation will carry popular support over the long haul - Vietnam was certainly not such a war.

#### THE PRESS

The press, and their performance have been subject to much acrimonious and often ill-founded criticism. Both the military and the government criticised them heavily at times during the war and they were subjects of many official inquiries subsequently. It is however both incorrect and dangerous to generalise about the press. They were, and remain, as different as they are numerous - and at the height of the American involvement in Vietnam there were nearly 650 correspondents there. They ranged from the excellent, experienced war correspondents, who had either been war reporters or active participants in World War II or Korea, to others who were amateurs seeking the sensational, name-making story. A few went to Vietnam simply for the fun!

Accreditation was a simple procedure for both reporters and photographers and proof of knowledge, understanding, objectivity, and prior experience were certainly not part of that process. As Phillip Knightley records:

"All sorts of correspondents, from all sorts of publications went to Vietnam. There were specialist writers from technical journals, trainee reporters from college newspapers, counter-insurgency experts from military publishers, religious correspondents, famous authors, small-town editors, old hands from Korea, even older hands from the Second World War

and what Henry Kamm of the 'New York Times' called 'proto-journalists', men who had never written a professional word or taken a professional photograph in their lives until the war brought them to Saigon. They all wrote stories that were used and presumably read, or took photographs that were bought and reproduced.

... Ambition, principally, had brought them all there. The war was the biggest story in the world at the time ... and there was no better place for a young reporter to put a gloss on a new career." (1)

A major problem faced by all correspondents was that too few of them understood the military, and even fewer of them had any appreciation of the nature of the war that they were reporting. This lack of knowledge made for considerable difficulties when they were discussing events with the military or with other officials, and was further compounded by the way in which a correspondent was expected to become the instant expert for his publication, even if he had only been in theatre for a few days. One further difficulty was that few of the correspondents spoke French and even fewer of them spoke Vietnamese. They were thus unable to seek opinions, advice or comments from most of the local population, and were reliant upon each other, the military or the government for information.

In order to try and help the press, as well as to publicise the successes of the United States and South Vietnamese efforts, daily briefings were given in Saigon to the media. These briefs, which became known as the 'Five o'clock Follies', were initially given by the military mission and subsequently by the Joint United States Public Affairs Office. Sadly these briefings lacked credibility from the start, when it became clear to the press that they were being told lies, or at least being told less than the whole truth.

In the early years the problem was most frequently the difference

between the official briefing line of 'how well things were going, and how well the Diem government was doing; and the clear reality that the reverse was the case - a reality that was apparent to any interested, inquisitive reporter. In later years official statistics, such as body counts, that could be readily checked by the press, perpetuated this mistrust between the press and the authorities - a mistrust that was never overcome.

The military authorities could not understand why the press were not overtly patriotic, and why they would not follow the official line, as had generally been the case in previous wars. In truth, few correspondents were against the war in Vietnam, but most were against the way in which that war was prosecuted; they wanted to see American assets being used to best effect and felt that, in many cases, this was not happening. There can have been few who did not want to see the United States emerge victorious, and they felt that it was not only right, but their duty, to report things as they saw them. If things were not going well they said so.

David Halberstam, of the New York Times, summed it up in this way:

"We would have liked nothing better than to believe that the war was going well, and that it would eventually be won, but it was impossible to believe these things without denying the evidence of our senses." (2)

There are many examples of things going wrong, especially in the early years, including the expulsion of correspondents because they wrote critical articles about the Diem regime or the efficacy of the American advisory efforts, or troubles because of honest, but unsympathetic reports. Early examples of the latter were the

reports submitted following the first significant battle of the war at Ap Bac.

"It was a humiliating defeat, rubbed with salt when David Halberstam...Browne of the Associated Press, Neil Sheehan of United Press International, and Turner of Reuters wrote stories quoting one of the United States advisors, Lieutenant-Colonel John Vann, on how well the Vietcong had fought and how cowardly the South Vietnamese had been - an assessment that did little to help Colonel Vann's career.

The correspondents learned the following month what the American mission thought of this sort of reporting. (An official report stated subsequently)...the correspondents were inexperienced and unsophisticated, and their reporting was irresponsible and sensationalized." (3)

Matters were not helped by the constant White House and Pentagon pressure on newspaper editors and proprietors to 'toe the party line'. To the anger of reporters in the field, the official line was often preferred by their chiefs to their own, first hand reports. Nothing could have been designed to antagonize the press more, especially as:

"...Despatches from the war zone reflected mostly what the reporters themselves saw, or heard from soldiers and officials. They may have emphasized what was going wrong, but it was emphasis supplied by their sources. The press did not manufacture events, and its details came from participants - often key figures who believed that United States policy was in error, and who pushed their views by making public bad news the policymakers refused to heed in private." (4)

From 1964 onwards, as the United States build-up grew towards its peak of over half a million men, the government became even more determined to conceal the full extent of its commitment from the public. To do so they needed a co-operative, or at

least acquiescent press, and they mounted a major public information campaign, which included paying foreign correspondents to visit Vietnam and to participate in well prepared conducted tours. It was inevitable that in such an atmosphere, journalists should feel trapped in a propaganda machine, and many rebelled as a result.

At this time there were also frequent appeals to the loyalty and patriotism of the press from senior politicians. Some answered the call, a few had always felt that it was their duty to report the war favourably for the United States, and continued to do so. Others did not.

There were other, general difficulties for the press throughout the war; some imposed upon them by the authorities, and others resulting from both the nature of the conflict and from the demands of their profession. At times restrictions were placed upon the press by the military or the State Department, generally in response to some unfavourable report but, as the war escalated, these petty problems were largely overtaken by bigger issues. The correspondents themselves had difficulties with the constant pressure to meet deadlines, especially for daily newspapers, and with the ever-present feeling that the sensational story was the one that would sell; as a result the more balanced, but less exciting, stories were often never written. This was particularly true for the many freelance journalists in Saigon. The need to meet deadlines created a

further problem because few correspondents had time to reflect upon what they were reporting. They became solely recorders of what they saw, rather than interpreters of it. Finally, the peculiar nature of the war which allowed the correspondents to live in the comparative comfort and safety of Saigon, while still being able to make daily visits to the battlefield, made for a curious divorce between themselves and the war-fighters; a separation seldom seen in previous wars. Whilst it may be that the war correspondent, living with a military unit and sharing their dangers, is too involved to be objective, the reverse is also true and can become a source of suspicion between the military and the press. This was certainly the case in Vietnam.

Official disaffection with the press reached its height with the reporting of the Tet offensive in 1968, and with the public disclosures about the My Lai massacres. The former was reported in such a manner that it appeared that the whole offensive was a debacle for the United States military, although the truth is that in military terms it was clearly a victory, even if that was not immediately apparent. It seems likely that adverse public opinion resulting from this reporting was a major factor in Lyndon Johnson's decision not to seek re-election in 1968. There is certainly little doubt that the thrust of the media coverage also sparked debate in Washington and that, for the first time, many politicians began

to seriously question the nature of the United States participation in the war.

The effect of the My Lai story was to horrify the public, and even more so because its publication signalled the release of many other stories of atrocities carried out by American servicemen - events that the media had not disclosed before. The American public, even one partially inured to the stark realities of war, was severely shaken to see the way in which some of their troops had behaved. Sadly, and all too often, the nature of the public is to damn all, for the folly and excesses of the few.

All in all the press had a difficult time in Vietnam. Some of the problems were of their own making, but other strains were the result of a lack of understanding by the military and the government. That the press had influence upon public opinion is undeniable, although it seems likely that, in the later years of the war at least, the press was only reinforcing growing public disaffection, rather than creating it.

#### THE TELEVISION WAR

Amongst all the phrases used to describe the Vietnam War, one of the most frequently quoted is that it was the 'television war'. It was certainly the first war to be relayed so constantly, so rapidly, and so effectively into the homes of

the general public. Whether this ready access to the public, a public becoming ever more avid for television news, was desirable, and whether the influence of such television was good or bad, remains a current debate. The two extreme views are represented by the following comments:

"But it was in Vietnam, and not on some remote and bloody hilltop but in Saigon itself, that the American media most dramatically outdid themselves in misreporting, for squarely political purposes, an important story and thereby materially influenced the course and outcome of the Vietnam War." (5)

"If there are one people in the world who are never, but absolutely never, going to understand the war in Vietnam it is the Americans who watched it on television. The war was meaningless to them; they don't know what happened at any single stage of that war and they never will and they are a lost generation as far as that is concerned and this is what worried me about television. The war was lost on the television screen of the United States." (6)

"In the early years of the war, roughly up to the Tet offensive...television coverage was lopsidedly favourable to American policy in Vietnam, often so explicitly favourable in fact, that we will have to rethink the role of the professional ideology of objective journalism..." (7)

Whatever the true weight of television's influence on public opinion it is undeniable that, during the Vietnam War, television was the main source of war news for the majority of the nation. CBS evening news alone drew a regular audience in excess of thirteen million viewers. The potential for such a popular medium to affect public opinion, was, and remains,

enormous. For this reason the nature of television's coverage of the war merits brief consideration.

In the first place it should be acknowledged that television reporters and film crews faced similar problems to those of their press colleagues. However, it may be that they faced even greater pressures to seek out the unusual or sensational story. The reason for this is the fact that television companies are in more direct competition with each other than the newspapers. Audience ratings are critical, and viewers are fickle; it is far simpler to change television channels than to make a permanent change of newspaper.

Television thus carried a considerable amount of spectacular film throughout the war years, much of it showing the horrors of modern warfare, in a way that had not been seen before. The shooting of the Vietcong officer and the napalm burnt girl at Tram Bang have already been mentioned, and there is little doubt of the immediate impact of such film reports. Some television producers pressed their reporters in Vietnam for more of the same. Richard Linley, a British television reporter described it thus:

"Before they were satisfied with a corpse...then they had to have people dying in action." (8)

The screening of such realities creates certain problems. The first is that they can be most misleading. The camera sees only a small part of the whole and can be made to be even more selective. The viewer will seldom question what is happening in the wider field and, unless the commentator tells him otherwise, will accept the television image at face value. The point is well made by Alan Hooper when discussing the Tram Bang film:

"...The girl who was burned by napalm had in fact been placed in a pagoda for safety, but she sneaked out with several other children to watch the battle." (9)

The next difficulty is that in spite of the horrors that television can reveal, the impact of the images can sometimes be less than might be expected. The problem is twofold. Firstly the audience is used to seeing extreme violence on their screens, indeed it is the very stuff of which a high proportion of television drama entertainment is made. This is compounded by the fact that the television image is small, and it is relatively simple for the viewer, sitting surrounded by familiar and comfortable things, to divorce the images from reality. Perhaps only some direct, and personal involvement with those people or incidents being shown on the screen brings the full force of the story home.

It is also true that the majority of reporters exercised some form of self-censorship on their filmed reports from Vietnam. The most horrific images seldom reached the screen.

The third problem is that it is easy for the public to relate particular events to the general. Thus, for many, the film of one Vietnamese girl being burnt by American napalm, meant that many hundreds of Vietnamese children were suffering the same horrors. Similarly the pictures of marines burning down Vietnamese huts meant that all United States servicemen were guilty of such over-reaction. Such misconceptions are readily created but are extremely difficult to erase.

It is revealing to read statistical evidence of the way in which the war was covered by television. The pattern changed dramatically as the war progressed. In truth, in the early years, there was considerable television support for the United States position. This approach changed from the mid-1960's and, from the Tet offensive onwards, was largely against the war and the administration's handling of the whole Vietnam issue. The Institute of American Strategy conducted a study into CBS news coverage of the war during the period 1972-73, and it is of interest to extract two facts from their comprehensive report. The first shows that in 1972 the CBS evening news program devoted 18.76% of its total air time to the war - only the election campaign received greater coverage. The second figure is even more revealing of attitudes as it shows that, in the same year, 80.97% of that

coverage was critical of United States and South Vietnamese policies or of the behavior and performance of the military. (6)

The rebuttal from television companies might well be that you 'should not shoot the messenger', but there is little doubt that such reporting must have had an effect on a public already becoming disenchanted with the war, and relying heavily upon television for news of it.

In summary it is still unclear whether the television coverage of the war was biased against the government and the military, or whether those responsible for shaping the news broadcasts were always working from completely neutral positions; they would have been remarkable people to achieve the latter stance, and it is of interest that Nancy Dickerson is explicit about her own standpoint:

"My position on Vietnam had evolved from the standard patriotic support for United States policy to total opposition. As the years went by it was clear that we were intruding in a civil war, fighting in the wrong place at the wrong time for a cause which our allies did not cherish as much as we, and in which our enemies were perceived to be fighting for the traditional American values." (10)

It seems likely that many other television journalists shared her view and that coverage of the war must have been coloured as a result.

## CONCLUSIONS

Such a brief examination of the media in Vietnam can do no more than capture general feelings and highlight them with occasional vignettes. In spite of this certain problems can be identified and valid deductions made as a result.

It was a frustrating war for all concerned, and both its length and ultimately depressing result were foreign to the American experience, and made it particularly difficult for the media to cover effectively - especially with so many inexperienced people involved in the process.

Those deductions which appear to stand out are:

- \* The inexperience of the media and their unpreparedness for the type of war that they were reporting, although it must be added that there were some outstanding correspondents.
- \* The dangers of lying to the media, or giving them less than the whole truth. They might discover it and, when they do, credibility and trust will be lost.
- \* The pressure imposed by deadlines.
- \* The demand for the sensational and the rejection of the more mundane, even if that was important.

- \* The susceptibility of the media to enemy propaganda, generally as a result of inexperience and lack of understanding of the nature of insurgent warfare.
- \* The dangers of television reporting giving false impressions.
- \* The danger that the public will translate the particular into the general.
- \* The potential hazards of stark reality being shown on television and shaking public confidence.

In the eyes of some the performance of the media was unpatriotic and unforgiveable:

"No United States conflict since the Civil War was to stir so much hostility among the military towards the media as the drawn-out conflict in Vietnam. Indeed some commentators (and generals) were retrospectively to conclude that the war was lost on American's television screens and in the newspapers, not on the battlefield." (11)

Others held more pragmatic views but the truth is that realities do not matter - perceptions do. If the authorities felt that they were badly served by the media, or the media felt that they were unreasonably restricted, mishandled,

misled, or abused by the authorities, then something had gone wrong. That was clearly the case in Vietnam and all three main parties: the government; the military; and the media had much to learn about each other subsequently. All the lessons may not yet have been learned.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Phillip Knightley, The First Casualty, p. 402.
2. Ibid., p. 380.
3. Ibid., p. 378.
4. Kim Willenson, The Bad War, p. 168.
5. William A. Rusher, The Coming Battle for the Media, p. 129.
6. Alan Hooper, The Military and the Media, p. 116.
7. Daniel C. Hallin, The Uncensored War, p. 110.
8. Knightley, p. 410.
9. Hooper, p. 115.
10. Nancy Dickerson, Amongst Those Present, pp. 143-44.
11. Harry G. Summers, "Western Media and Recent Wars", Military Review, May 1986, p. 4.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FALKLANDS CONFLICT

The Falklands conflict in 1982 was the antithesis of the Vietnam War in almost every way. Firstly it was short. The Argentine invasion occurred on 2 April and the surrender was signed on 14 June. The entire conflict was confined to some isolated islands in the South Atlantic and the waters immediately surrounding them; islands that were British territory. The number of military involved was comparatively small; and finally, the nature of the Argentine aggression generated immediate and solid national support for the British Government and such action as they saw fit to take. How different from the American experience.

Given these differences it appears strange that relationships between the Government, the military and the media became so severely strained - just as they had been in Vietnam. It is this that makes the Falklands conflict such an intriguing case study for this paper. It is made more curious as, in contrast to Vietnam, the isolation of the islands completely restricted the movement of the media in the war zone. No media representatives could reach the islands or transmit their reports back to Britain without the direct help of the

military. As will be shown, this potential advantage was two-edged.

All parties involved were conscious of the Vietnam experience and, whatever the truth of the part that the media may have played in the final American position in that war, they were determined to avoid repeating the mistakes that had been made. Whilst some, but not all, of those mistakes were avoided, others took their place, and the Falklands conflict was to prove to be a period of intense disagreement between the media, the military and the Government; indeed, it also created very considerable and unprecedented internal arguments within the media - arguments that became vitriolic at times.

In the aftermath of the conflict, amidst much mutual recrimination, there was a Parliamentary inquiry into the handling of the media and public information, and the Ministry of Defence initiated its own study in an attempt to identify what had gone wrong and to institute permanent remedial action. This chapter will examine the Falklands conflict and identify those general lessons that may be drawn from it that may help in developing a better relationship between the key actors in future small wars.

#### EARLY DIFFICULTIES

When the Argentine invaded the Falklands there were only 4 British pressmen in the islands and the speed of events

prevented them from despatching any reports before the invaders had captured the only, readily available transmission system - the Cable & Wireless Telephone station. It is true that some islanders had short wave transmitters, and were radio hams, but their resources were never to become available to the media. There was thus no way in which the British media could obtain information from the Falklands Islands after 2 April, other than through the Ministry of Defence briefings in London, or from the Argentinian media, who had access to comprehensive coverage with their forces in the islands, as well as immediate access to transmission facilities for both written reports and television film. This was to be the cause of many of the early difficulties in Britain and caused some mistrust from which some relationships never fully recovered.

The Ministry of Defence in London were unable to give much detailed information at their briefings as they had none to give. Once the task force was mounted there was even less information available as the military understandably wished to keep the whole operation, including the likely tasks of the force, as secure as possible. With little worthwhile information available from official sources in Britain, the media turned to the wealth of material flowing from Argentina and made use of that instead. The nature of the war and the regime in Argentina dictated that media coverage there contained much propaganda material made more credible through the inclusion of supportive fact wherever possible. This situation pertained until the British landings had been

achieved in San Carlos, and led to considerable antagonism between the Government and the media. The Government accused the media of treating information from London and Buenos Aires as being equally credible. Things came to a head on 11 May, when Mrs. Thatcher stated in the House of Commons that:

"I know how strongly many people feel that the case for our country is not being put with sufficient vigour on certain - I do not say all - BBC programs." (1)

This accusation of lack of balance caused some bitter, retaliatory reports in the media but the Government failed to fill the information gap that was largely responsible for the problem.

A further difficulty during the early weeks of the campaign was the use of defense analysts, retired officers and others to speculate about future operations and developments. This practice stemmed, at least in part, from the same problem of a lack of hard information and a genuine, understandable wish to inform the public. However, there were many accusations that such speculation gave considerable assistance to the Argentine, whilst adding little that was vital to the public debate in Britain.

Initial problems such as these were probably inevitable given the remoteness of the Falkland Islands and the total unpreparedness of the British Government and military for the

Argentine invasion. There was no suitable contingency plan for responding to the crisis and, when a plan was drawn up, with commendable speed, no provision was made for the inclusion of media representatives. From this lack of foresight stemmed many of the problems which were to develop subsequently.

The decision to send the task force was taken quickly and the first element of that force were to leave Britain within four days of the invasion occurring. After much heated wrangling, and the personal intervention of the Prime Minister's press secretary it was agreed that twenty-nine correspondents, including camera teams and reporters from both British television companies, could accompany the task force. No foreign correspondents were included; an error of judgement that was to create some problems of credibility for the official British line later in the conflict. The selected correspondents were given berths in Royal Navy and merchant marine ships, in spite of the vigorous objections of several senior naval officers. The first fifteen sailed with the fleet on 5 April, with the remainder following in the second wave a few days later.

These correspondents were largely unprepared and inexperienced. Events had caught everyone by surprise and newspapers, as well as radio and television companies, had been forced to select whoever was available, rather than their best defense, or war, correspondents. As with Vietnam the majority of those media personnel who sailed with the task force lacked

the basic experience and understanding of the military to be able to do their job in the most effective way; many of them were also physically ill-prepared for the rigours ahead.

"Ahead of them lay what? None could have anticipated that they would spend more than six weeks at sea, a large part of that time under air attack; or that they would become part of Britain's first major amphibious assault since D-Day; or that they would be expected to dig their own trenches, cook their own rations and generally survive on their own a gruelling three-week campaign: none of this was foreseen.

The armed forces are prepared for war; journalists are not. Most were too young even to have remembered, let alone endured, National Service. Yet arguably the Falklands was to require greater physical and mental readiness than any war covered by the media in recent times. The haphazard way in which journalists were selected and sent on their way, in most cases without even the most rudimentary equipment, could easily have proved fatal." (2)

This all led to a lack of trust and respect between some of the military and some of the media representatives. Of course there were some of the latter who were outstanding and many of the former who were intolerant and unhelpful. Some of the journalists made full use of the long journey south and spent much of it learning from the military and preparing themselves for their task. Major General Moore gave them much credit during his evidence to the Parliamentary inquiry:

"I think that my Brigades formed a very high regard for many of the journalists and for the amount of effort they put into training with our men on the way down and to marching across the Falklands with them." (3)

## THE JOURNEY SOUTH

The long period of anxious waiting, between the departure of the task force and the landings at San Carlos - a period of some seven weeks - brought many problems to light. Whilst it is not intended to identify and exemplify every problem in this paper, some examples will afford an understanding of the way in which relationships can become strained, and will provide some indicators of how those strains may be avoided in the future.

The first, and perhaps most important, problem was that, in 1982, not only did the media personnel with the task force lack the necessary experience and understanding of the military, but the converse was also largely true as well. In general the Army and the Royal Marines were comfortable with the media, were used to their presence, and understood their needs and methods. The Royal Navy did not. Naturally such relationships are largely personality dependent and do not usually allow for easy generalization, but, within the task force the tension between the media and the Navy developed rapidly and evidenced itself through too many acrimonious exchanges and reports - the net result generally being less co-operation with the media than should have been the case, to the detriment of all.

Michael Nicholson, an Independent Television News correspondent recalls the experience thus:

"Captain Middleton did not like the press. He said to us from the very start that we were an embarrassment to him. He said, I remember, that it

was not the first time that he had been to war because he was at Suez but it was the first time that he had been to war with the press and he was not looking forward to the journey. He gave briefings for the first two or three days and that was the end of it. I got very friendly with a number of senior officers at commander-level and on one evening they confessed to me that they were outraged by a briefing they had had from the Captain in the few days after Portsmouth on our way out, in which they were told to be wary of us and that the information flow throughout the ship would be restricted because of our presence." (4)

In an attempt to ease the relationships between the military and the media, the Ministry of Defence had despatched five of its civilian press officers with the task force. These men, who were soon christened the 'minders' by the press, were primarily responsible for ensuring that the guidelines about media access and the contents of media despatches were followed. They also spent much time trying to ensure that the media were afforded the opportunity to transmit their copy. Their final role, and one of the most contentious, was that they were directed to make initial checks of all media copy for security breaches, before that copy was vetted by a uniformed military officer, normally the ship's captain. Although they were all ex-journalists they found that their position was an invidious one - most of them soon lost the trust of the media and, in some cases, the respect of the military. Michael Nicholson was to recall after the war:

"They would say, 'We understand your problems: we are ex-journalists ourselves', and we discovered that they were night-subs on the Mid-Somerset Chronicle or something: they were mostly failed journalists rather than ex-journalists." (5)

That their problems were manifold was recognized by Sir Frank Cooper, the Permanent Under Secretary at the Ministry of Defence, who described them as:

"The hinge on which the door was going to grate however much oil was put on it." (6)

The truth is that they had an extremely important but difficult job to do and that they were no better prepared for it than most of the military and media with whom they had to deal. Their difficulties were compounded by two major issues throughout the conflict. Firstly, adequate provisions for the timely transmission of media copy and film were never made and, secondly, there were frequent anomalies between what could be reported from the task force under Ministry of Defence rules, and what appeared to be common knowledge in London.

The first of these difficulties has been the subject of much discussion and technical examination since 1982. The problem was quite simply that all written despatches and voice reports had to be transmitted over Naval communications facilities. Such a system was bound to lead to conflict and it did. At one point the Captain of HMS Invincible, himself a supporter of the press, had to limit each embarked correspondent to a maximum of seven hundred words of copy per day, and only permitted the transmission of that copy in the less busy hours in the middle of the night. His policy meant that most reports took at least two days to appear in print. From the Navy's point of view this was unfortunate but inevitable, as media reports were

using up to thirty per cent of the entire signals traffic from the South Atlantic before then. Naturally, in times of electronic silence no despatches could be sent at all, which was the experience of two reporters for eight days on one occasion.

For television the difficulties were even more severe. Neither the BBC nor the IBA possessed satellite ground stations suitable for transmitting high quality television pictures back to Britain from the deck of a ship at sea. As a result they were dependent upon the Navy or the largest merchant ships, and those facilities were seldom available to them. As a result, most of the British television film travelled back to England by sea, leading some correspondents to describe the Falklands conflict as 'the worst reported war since the Crimea'.

"For television the situation was on occasion, marginally worse than it had been during the Crimea. In 1854 the Charge of the Light Brigade was graphically described in The Times twenty days after it took place. In 1982 some TV film took as long as twenty-three days to get back to London, and the average delay for the whole war, from filming to transmission, was seventeen days." (7)

Whilst there were considerable technical difficulties with the transmission of television pictures from the task force, many correspondents believed that the Government and the Ministry of Defence were being deliberately obstructive, so as to limit the quantity of television film broadcast. Undoubtedly some people were very concerned that the Falklands conflict could have

become the subject of television scrutiny, in the way that the Vietnam War undoubtedly did. Speaking in London a month after the end of the war, Sir Frank Cooper said:

"To be quite frank about it, if we had had transmission of television throughout, the problems of what could or could not be released would have been very severe indeed. We have been criticized in many quarters, and we will no doubt go on being criticized in many quarters, but the criticism we have is a small drop in the ocean compared with the problems we would have had in dealing with television coverage." (8)

The second difficulty, and one forcibly expressed by the media, was the inconsistent treatment of reports by the Ministry of Defence or the Government. It was a source of much justifiable frustration for reporters with the task force to have their reports frozen, delayed, or totally rejected by the press officers, only to find subsequently that the contents of those reports was in the public domain already. There is little doubt that dual standards were being applied at times, although it is also clear that some of the difficulties arose from genuine mistakes.

All in all, the experiences of the media representatives who sailed with the task force were, at best, unhappy and, in some cases they were so frustrating and acrimonious that the correspondents views were coloured during subsequent events.

## SAN CARLOS TO SURRENDER

The landings in San Carlos on 21 May gave a new lift to everybody and allowed many of the correspondents to get ashore and work closely with the Marine and Army units with whom they had travelled south. It is worthy of note that few complaints have been voiced by those correspondents who did so, or by the military with whom they worked; indeed, considerable mutual respect developed. Nonetheless, there were frustrations.

For reasons that are still unclear, some correspondents were not allowed ashore at San Carlos for a considerable time. One reporter spent eight days aboard his ship awaiting clearance to disembark. The transmission of copy remained a problem and a number of incidents occurred that amplify some of the strains felt by all parties. The first was that the media were increasingly accused of being insecure. Examples of this were that the Navy objected to the submarine responsible for the sinking of the Belgrano - HMS Conqueror - being reported by name. They further accused the press of helping the Argentinian Air Force by informing the world that a number of the bombs being dropped on the fleet in San Carlos Water did not explode; this was coupled to speculation at home as to why this should have been so. Whilst hindsight may well raise questions about the damage that such disclosures really caused, they were sources of real concern at the time, and any problems of that nature rapidly lead to a breakdown in trust.

Two further, specific incidents are worthy of note as they are representative of the sort of problems that were all too frequent. The first is the well reported, and much discussed compromise of the assault on Goose Green and Darwin. It is a matter of record now that the BBC reported the attack on Goose Green well before the assault had begun. It is also beyond dispute that the Argentinians moved reinforcements into the settlement after that report had been broadcast. What is unclear is whether that reinforcement resulted from the broadcast or not. In answering a question on the matter in front of the Parliamentary inquiry, Major General Moore said:

"Some of the Argentinian prisoners did say that they had been reinforced in Goose Green after that (BBC) announcement. I do not know and I have no evidence to support a contention that the one was the result of the other but the timing was such that certainly many of my people thought it was." (9)

Where the BBC report came from is not known, although it seems likely to have been a leak from Parliament or the Ministry of Defence. However that does not really matter for, whatever the truth, and whatever the cause, it caused very considerable distrust between the military on the ground, the Ministry of Defence, and the media.

The second incident is the way in which the Argentine surrender was covered and reported. A number of correspondents had obtained dramatic, early copy concerning the cease-fire and, not unnaturally, wished to despatch it with all haste to

London. All of them made their way back to the ships from the outskirts of Port Stanley, only to be met with the same response from the press officers: That there was a total news blackout. Max Hastings, who had walked into Port Stanley ahead of anybody else and had a dramatic report to give, recalled his discussions with the senior press officer thus:

"A bitter argument followed, in which it was put to him (the press officer) that Argentinian radio was already announcing a cease-fire, and that it was quite impossible to conceive what injury to British security might be done by a despatch reporting my visit to Port Stanley. Mr. Helm and his colleagues were unmoved." (10)

Only minutes after this the reporters experienced the ultimate frustration of hearing the news of the cease-fire being broadcast on the BBC World Service, following Mrs. Thatcher's announcement to the House of Commons. Such things did little to improve relationships, and those strained relationships were further tested when the media were excluded from witnessing the signing of the surrender document later.

#### PROBLEMS IN LONDON

In London, relationships between the Government, the military and the media altered as the conflict developed. On the whole the early frustrations and mistrust were never wholly repaired, and there were continual complaints by the media of delays and procrastination. The press were particularly upset about the delays to copy despatched from the South Atlantic, delays for which there was never a satisfactory explanation. Mrs. Thatcher complained continually that the British point of view

was not being given sufficient emphasis by the media and the Ministry of Defence and the Government appeared to disagree on several occasions about what could, or could not, be made public.

Within the media, especially the press, there were many conflicts. These arose for many reasons, including circulation wars, which were ever present, and of course added to the pressures on correspondents with the task force. Some of the arguments stemmed from differing political opinions expressed within the newspapers. The Sun carried a blatantly patriotic line throughout the conflict for its twelve million readers, and accused others, who did not do so, of treason. Part of its editorial on 7 May read as follows:

"There are traitors in our midst. Margaret Thatcher talked about them in the House of Commons yesterday...The Prime Minister did not speak of treason. The Sun does not hesitate to use that word...What is it but treason to talk on television, as Peter Snow talked, questioning whether the Government's version of the sea battles was to be believed?...The Daily Mirror, however has pretensions as a mass-sale newspaper. What is it but treason for this timorous, whining publication to plead day after day for appeasing the Argentine dictators..." (11)

That the Daily Mirror should reply with an equally vitriolic rebuttal was inevitable. Such public arguments did little to maintain public confidence in the press, or to make for easy relationships amongst the journalists with the task force, who of necessity had to be very interdependent.

Perhaps the most important issue of all was that of the Government's management of the news. The nature of the conflict, with all the constraints under which the media had to work, afforded the government a unique opportunity to control the media; there are those who say that not only did the Government do so, but that it did so to excess.

There is little doubt that some press stories from the Falklands were deliberately delayed, or mysteriously lost; there were some opportunities for earlier release of television film than actually occurred; the Government viewed any criticism as unpatriotic and unhelpful and did all that it reasonably could to stop, or rebut, such reports or commentary; the Government never established a consistent line on matters of taste; and they were accused of using the press for disinformation.

These last two issues bear brief examination. Firstly, the question of disinformation. There were certainly occasions on which the government and the Ministry of Defence chose not to disclose the whole truth. On those occasions, such reticence was normally excused on security grounds, although there were times when the motives were deception of the enemy or, at least, propaganda. Two examples of disinformation were: the Ministry of Defence briefing at which any amphibious landing on the Falklands was ruled out, less than twelve hours before the landing at San Carlos took place; and the story of HMS Superb.

That submarine was reported to be seen leaving Gibraltar only a few days after the Argentinians had invaded the Falklands. Coincidentally in London reports were heard of a submarine sailing south. The media at once connected the two reports and declared that HMS Superb was off to Falklands waters. They were not pleased when the submarine was found to be at her home port in Scotland some time later. The Ministry of Defence view was that the early, and incorrect, reports were useful, in that they led the Argentinians to believe that a British submarine was in the South Atlantic many days earlier than was in fact the case. The Ministry further believed that it was not their task to correct press errors.

As to the denial of the imminent landings at San Carlos, the official line is clear. The spokesman, Sir Frank Cooper, did not lie to the media, although his form of words could have been misleading, and he certainly did not tell the whole truth. However, to have said more would have jeopardized the security of the operation. The press chose to accept Sir Frank's statement at face value and published their stories accordingly. One typical example will suffice:

"There will be no mass landing, D-Day style. It will be a series of smash-and-grab operations by the back door, knocking out the Argentinian occupation bit by bit...The defence source said: 'There will not be a single punch.'" (12)

It is easy to understand the anger that the media felt when, only twelve hours later, a major amphibious assault was launched.

The main arguments put forward by the media after the war can be illustrated by the comments of Jim Meacham, Defence Correspondent for the Economist, to the Parliamentary inquiry:

"....I am not saying that the press ought to be repositories for secret information, but I am saying that I do not think the Government has any business in lying to the people by inference or implication or any other way through the medium of the free press...I cannot agree this is a legitimate activity for the Government to try to subvert the reliability of the free press." (13)

By way of contrast it is important to see what the Ministry of Defence said on this same issue to the inquiry:

"....I certainly did not tell people that we were going ashore with the forces that we were. I am quite ready to accept that I did not reveal the whole picture and I am delighted that there was a good deal of speculation and it was very helpful to us, quite frankly...We did not tell a lie - but we did not tell the whole truth." (14)

What then of the question of taste, which was addressed briefly in previous chapters? The lack of timely television coverage during the conflict meant that there were few, immediate visual records available to the media until after the surrender. British television audiences were thus not subjected to nightly film of war in all its horrors. However, some of the film that became available after the war contained vivid scenes and most were edited by the television companies themselves, in order to avoid causing undue distress or offence. With little television coverage to worry over, the main problem for the Government was that it never established a consistent line over

such matters as releasing details of bad news - like the loss of warships or aircraft. It was never clear to the media whether the next of kin of casualties had to be informed or not before casualties names were broadcast. Sometimes such items were delayed for long periods, and at others they were announced immediately - frequently before the media had had time to file their copy. The Parliamentary inquiry raised this whole question as one of their main line of questioning:

"How far should the Government's concern to maintain morale - both among its troops in the field and among their families and the general public at home - extend to its censorship of the style rather than the information content of media reporting?" (15)

Before leaving the issue of the media coverage of the Falklands, with its many intricate and seemingly insoluble difficulties, it is important to realize that the journalists themselves were not all paragons of virtue. They must share at least some of the blame for the strained relationships that existed for so much of the time. Kim Sabido, a radio reporter, laid considerable blame at the feet of his peers:

"We have all been acting to a smaller or larger degree like overblown egos auditioning for parts in some awful B war movie. (Some reporters have been outright liars) perpetrated I believe, in a blind desire to be the first with the news instead of just trying to be truthful...two journalists claimed to have read through binoculars street names in Stanley when still ten miles behind the front line and within sight of nothing more than an arctic ration pack." (16)

## CONCLUSIONS

From a military point of view the outcome of the Falklands conflict was an unqualified success, notwithstanding the many important lessons that arose from it. The result was also a strategic and diplomatic success, reasserting Britain's position in regard to her dependent territories. On the domestic political front in Britain the victory was a major personal triumph for Mrs. Thatcher, and one which she used to great advantage in the subsequent general election

However, it will have become clear from this chapter that relations between the Government, the military and the media were severely strained by the conflict. One immediate result of these strains was the establishment of a Parliamentary Inquiry to examine the whole question of the handling of the press and public information during the conflict. Many of the recommendations of that inquiry have already been adopted in order to prevent, or at least minimize such difficulties in the future.

The key lessons which can be drawn from the handling of the media during the Falklands conflict appear to be:

- \* There was no effective contingency plan for including media representatives in the task force.
- \* There was no sensible or equitable procedure for the accreditation of media representatives.

- \* No foreign representatives were included amongst those media personnel who were eventually selected to join the task force.
- \* The Ministry of Defence public relations officers lacked credibility with the media and, in some cases, actual antagonism resulted.
- \* The military and, in particular the Royal Navy, were unprepared for the media, did not trust them, and failed to appreciate their needs.
- \* Insufficient thought was given to the provision of transmission facilities for the media.
- \* Government and Ministry of Defence policies on the media and, more importantly, on the handling and release of information were confused, conflicting, inconsistent and ill-understood by all the parties involved.
- \* The use of "arm-chair experts" by the broadcast media to comment and speculate upon past, present and future military operations was ill-advised and potentially dangerous. It is still not clear whether this danger was more perceived than actual, although at times media speculation undoubtedly went too far.

- \* There was no policy direction on the difficult question of "taste" and of sanitizing the images of war.
- \* In the early stages of the conflict the Government failed to appreciate the media's thirst for information, and that, if that thirst was not quenched by British sources then the media would look elsewhere for satisfaction. In the main that alternative source was Argentina.
- \* The Government did not appreciate the inherent dangers of using the media for disinformation, or at least for the promulgation and perpetuation of rumours that afforded temporary advantage.

There were other valid and important lessons but perhaps the truth is that all three groups of actors have much to learn and to put right. Throughout the Falklands conflict the one vital ingredient that appears to have been absent was trust.

Part of the final report of the Parliamentary Inquiry summarizes some aspects of the affair thus:

"On difficulty about drawing too many hard and fast conclusions from this inquiry is that any future war is most unlikely to reproduce the conditions of the Falklands campaign. The Falklands conflict was of limited duration; it was fought in a limited geographical area

against a single adversary; it involved no allies directly; control over communications and over press correspondents could have been total; no foreign press were present; and as the blockade of the Falklands tightened few direct reports of the fighting were available from the other side of the battle zone. In the words of Sir Frank Cooper "We will never get a simpler conflict than the Falklands". If any of these conditions had not obtained the problems for information handling would have increased substantially...This makes it the more important for the criteria for incorporating the media into the organization for war to be loosely worked out and to be based upon agreed general principles which take into account the variety of operational circumstances which could be encountered." (17)

#### ENDNOTES

1. House of Commons, Defence Committee, The Handling of Press and Public Information During the Falklands Conflict. Vol. I p. viii.
2. Robert Harris, Gotcha! The Media, the Government and the Falklands Crisis, p. 22.
3. House of Commons, Defence Committee, The Handling of Press and Public Information During the Falklands Conflict. Vol II p. 279.
4. Harris, p. 30.
5. Ibid., p. 28.
6. Ibid..
7. Ibid., p. 56.
8. House of Commons, Defence Committee, Vol II, p. 446.
9. Ibid., p. 296.
10. Harris, p. 140.
11. Ibid., pp. 50-51.
12. Ibid., p. 111.

13. House of Commons, Defence Committee, Vol II, p. 229.
14. Ibid., pp. 143-144.
15. House of Commons, Defence Committee, Vol I, p. xiv.
16. Harris, pp. 143-144.
17. House of Commons, Defence Committee, Vol I, p. iii.

## CHAPTER V

### OPERATION "URGENT FURY"

Superficially the United States' intervention in Grenada in October 1983 bears some resemblance to the Falklands conflict. Both battlegrounds were small islands to which access could be controlled and, at the time of the military action, there were very few professional media representatives on either island. However, comparisons thereafter do not hold up too well except that relationships between the Government, the military and the media were at least as severely strained during Operation "Urgent Fury" as they had been in the Falklands.

The American experience of the media at war was, and largely remains, coloured by Vietnam and to this was added the lessons that resulted from the British experience in the Falklands conflict. In principle the media was distrusted and, as a result, were specifically banned from traveling to Grenada with the task force, or by private means. The government and the military were determined that the media would not get it wrong again! A number of correspondents were equally determined to beat the ban and to obtain first hand information. Some chartered fishing boats from nearby islands in order to reach Grenada; one such was Josh Mankiewicz from ABC:

"The fishing boat halted when a US destroyer cut across its bow. I got a good look at the gun on the foredeck and decided that we were

simply outclassed. I know 'force majeure' when I see it. The commander of that 'force majeure' and of the Second Fleet, was Vice Admiral Joseph Metcalf III...He made no secret of the fact that he was responsible for the censorship - and made no apologies either. Said Metcalf to protesting reporters: "I'm down here to take an island. I don't need you running around and getting in the way...We'll stop you. We've got the means to do that." (1)

The ban on the press remained in force for two days, with one further day of restricted press pool coverage, before the flood-gates were opened for two or three days of controlled, guided tours for the media. By the end of the first week nearly 400 media representatives had been to Grenada but, by the time that they were allowed to arrive in strength, the military operations were completed. The majority of the coverage of the military actions could thus only be reported as a result of military briefings and communiques, coupled with the messages of amateur radio operators. The latter were acknowledged to be of doubtful accuracy and the former were found to be providing, at best, an official, sanitized version of the situation.

It was inevitable that such a situation would lead to high emotions on every side. It did. The military and the Government were determined to keep the media away; some key members of the White House press staff were deliberately kept in the dark, including the President's Deputy Press Secretary who resigned in protest; the media claimed that they were being misled by some of the official press releases and that the public was being denied access to impartially reported

information. Indeed the public were unable to obtain the full facts about the operation until some time after its completion. In a wider, international political and strategic sense such censorship must have played into the hands of all those who opposed the United States in general, and those who opposed the Grenada intervention in particular. However, it should be added that the majority of the public appeared to accept the Government's ban on the media - at least as evidenced by letters and other communications with the press. Some of the press themselves were cautious about joining the general media clamour of complaint:

"'Rather than mounting a constitutional soapbox the press might better spend its time contemplating why it was not informed and invited,' said the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Declared conservative columnist Patrick J. Buchanan: 'If senior US commanders running this operation harbor a mistrust of the American press, theirs is not an unmerited contempt.'" (2)

Whilst the unrestricted access of the media to Grenada could have jeopardized the military operations, although that appears to be an exaggerated position to take, the benefits of allowing independent correspondents to report the situation seems to outweigh almost any other consideration. Of course there may have had to be control of numbers (400 press men considerably outnumbered the Cuban military found on the island), and some censorship, if only by time, might have been necessary for sensitive issues.

A statement made by the Secretary of State, George Shultz, in December, 1983, is revealing and of concern if it truly reflects Government thinking. He said that journalists were banned from covering the invasion of Grenada because:

"Reporters are always against us so they're always seeking to report something that is going to screw things up...Reporters will possibly be banned from other military actions in the future because the priority in such cases will be on accomplishing a mission and not blowing the operation by this tremendous sense that reporters seem to have these days that they have to know everything before you do." (3)

The exclusion of the media led, as it had in the early stages of the Falklands conflict, to much speculation in the media; it caused the same fears of compromise to military operations and security to be voiced. However, it seems that the short duration of the military action avoided any likelihood of these fears being realized.

In addition there were instances in which the matter of taste was raised by the public. In one case, Time produced a number of colour photographs, including one of the body of an American helicopter crewman lying on the rocks near his downed aircraft. Subsequent editions of the magazine carried a number of letters of protest from the readership, of which two merit reproduction here.

"I fail to see any justification for your tasteless photograph of the body of one of my fallen comrades, the helicopter pilot lying dead on the beach." (4)

"As the wife of a Marine pilot, I found the picture of the dead airman on the beach excessively vivid. Reality can sometimes be too gruesome." (5)

Whilst neither of these letters is violently opposed to the picture, indeed their tone is more sorrow than anger, they do raise the whole question of necessity and desirability of showing the full horrors of war to the public.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Whilst this overview of the handling of the media during Operation "Urgent Fury" is deliberately brief, the importance of some of the conclusions that can be drawn from it must not be under-valued. It is of interest, and some concern, that there should be so much similarity between some of these conclusions and those resulting from the studies of Vietnam and the Falklands. In spite of a learning process of over twenty-five years, things seem to have improved little since the Vietnam era.

The key issues from Grenada seem to be:

- \* There was no contingency plan for the inclusion of the media.
- \* There was no pre-planned system for accreditation and control of the media.

- \* Ingrained, overt and freely expressed dislike of the media by both the Government and the military caused severe tensions.
- \* Official communiques and statements were used for disinformation, or at least to tell only part of the whole truth.
- \* There was a serious shortage of transmission facilities for the press and the broadcast media once they were allowed to travel to Grenada.
- \* There was no guidance on the question of taste, as a result some photographic coverage clearly offended and caused distress to some of the public.

The American invasion of Grenada was a military success, or rather it was a military operation which had a successful outcome. However, it demonstrated clearly the depths to which relations between the Government, the military and the media had sunk. The Government and the military expressed a total lack of trust in the media - a feeling that was very largely reciprocated. That situation, which is not unique to the United States, must be remedied. There must be a sensible middle road between the two extreme views represented by the following letters to Time magazine:

"So the press was not allowed to go to Grenada and do its liberal, biased reporting. Whoopee!" (6)

"The press must understand that the primary objective in war is to attain victory with a minimal loss of life. Delaying the news for a few days to achieve this is a small price to pay." (7)

"This country has no future as a democracy unless the press is free to report on the good and the bad. President Reagan was wrong to exclude the media from going to Grenada." (8)

"Freedom of the press is a precious right. Without it Americans would be fed claptrap by bureaucrats, who would then be their only source of information. When I hear the public lambasting the press, I shudder." (8)

#### ENDNOTES

1. Otto Friedrich, "Anyone Want to go to Grenada?", Time, 14 November 1983, p. 70.
2. Ibid., p. 71.
3. Margaret Shapiro, "Shultz Defends Press Ban," The Washington Post, 16 December 1983, p. A10.
4. "Letters", Time, 28 November 1983, p. 4. (Col. Richard L. Upchurch).
5. Ibid. (Teeny Massey).
6. Ibid., p. 8. (Dony Gideon).
7. Ibid., p. 4. (Harry M. Sanchez).
8. Ibid. (George A. Fulford).
9. Ibid., p. 8. (Bea Sommers).

## CHAPTER VI

### THE IMPACT OF FUTURE TECHNOLOGY

An examination of the true impact of present, and near future, technological advances on news gathering and transmission merits a study of its own. The whole communications field is dynamic, with new and improved developments becoming available at a rapid pace. It is not intended that this short chapter should provide a comprehensive review of what is, or will soon be, available; nor will it dwell overlong on the likely consequences of such improvements. However, no study of the way in which the media report war can overlook the impact of technology, and the potential changes that it may bring.

At present, major television networks make infrequent, but increasing use of commercial satellite pictures, bought from western or Soviet sources, in order to enhance and illustrate their news stories. The picture quality available from these satellites is of high resolution and, when coupled to the new High Definition Television, will provide viewers with pictures of exceptional quality and detail. Had such coverage been readily available during the Falklands conflict in 1982 then much of the security of British military operations would have been forfeited, as the open nature of the terrain made true concealment from the air virtually impossible to achieve.

The real difficulty in this is that such coverage is freely available to all who wish to buy it - friend and foe, and

supportive and potentially hostile media alike. John Nott - Britain's Secretary of Defence during the Falklands conflict - has said that he believes 'that censorship will become impossible with the growth of satellite coverage.'(1) If he is correct then future governments will be unable to use the media for disinformation or propaganda purposes, the military will have to come to terms with the potential loss of security, and the media will have to closely examine their standards and ethics. The success of relationships between these groups will largely depend upon mutual trust.

Quite apart from the increasing availability of commercial satellites for the acquisition of photographic news, other developments are already affecting the way in which the media can collect and disseminate news and information. Lightweight video cameras (including the thousands of them that are now privately owned), and man portable satellite communications systems are all changing the traditional methods of correspondents, including war correspondents. In both the Falklands and Grenada one major source of friction was the need for the media to rely upon military sources for the transmission of their copy and photographs; man-portable systems offer the media a means of circumventing this problem. Of course the use of such systems further complicates the problems for the military or governments who seek to control the output of the media - for whatever reasons.

These developments will all make relationships between the military, governments and the media more difficult, but perhaps the over-riding problem is likely to simply be the vast amount of news and information that will be available. The thirst for news of conflict is avid and almost unquenchable, as the numbers of media representatives who tried to get to both the Falklands and Grenada show. Without being defeatist about the problems Sir Frank Cooper summed it up thus:

"I think the only conclusion I can safely reach is that nobody has thought about this in anything like the depth that needs to be done to try and find out answers to difficult questions. Indeed, there are no simple or short answers to any of these issues. These are major and fundamental questions which will have a bigger impact on any kind of warfare than we have ever supposed to be the case." (2)

#### ENDNOTES

1. Robert Harris, Gotcha! The Media, the Government and the Falklands Crisis. p. 151.
2. House of Commons, Defence Committee, Vol II, p. 442.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear from the foregoing that all has not been well with the relationships between the military, the government, and the media in any recent small war. The three such wars that have been examined in this paper have all highlighted some of the causes of the strained relationships. On the whole, these studies have identified long-standing problems - problems which have not been corrected in light of past experience.

It is not surprising that these problems arise, although more could undoubtably have been done to alleviate some of them in the past. Each of the three groups wants a different end product from the flow of news and public information. The military are determined to maintain their security and will raise considerable barriers to achieve this end. Governments want a supportive press in order to ensure that, they receive the support that they need, both at home and abroad. That support is needed if they are to be able to prosecute the war to a successful conclusion. Public opinion is a critical ingredient in that success and the media has some influence in helping to shape that opinion. In a lecture to the Canadian Land Forces Command and Staff College in 1970, Colonel Maurice Tugwell emphasized the importance of public opinion thus:

"When historians come to study military events of the late 60s and early 70s they may conclude

that the major lesson for soldiers to learn from that period was this - that if you cannot fight an enemy in a way that public opinion at home, and fair-minded opinion overseas, find tolerable, then find another enemy. To endeavour for long to conduct a campaign in the face of really hostile opinion may lose you more than just a battle." (1)

But what of the third group of actors in this uneasy triumvirate - the media? In general they seek open access to information and the right to use their own judgement on what to report and how and when it should be reported. Their views on these issues will not always coincide with those of the government or the military. The problem is made more difficult because the media representatives are individuals. They are not one amorphous group. They are very different and each correspondent and editor will use his own experience, education, and political allegiance to colour his reports; he will also take into account the nature of his target audience. For all that, some of which is anathema to the well structured military, few representatives of the domestic media will deliberately try to jeopardize military operations or the pursuit of national objectives. However, there will always be some mavericks, and the foreign media may well have radically different view points. The position of the responsible media seems to be well described by Martin Bell, a BBC Television news correspondent:

"It will be objected that the media are not always seen to be on the Army's side. To be quite honest, we are not always on the Army's side. We are on the side of reporting the truth as we see it and as favourably as we

can. We are committed to supporting the military ...but we are not committed to supporting the military as so far as they might be in conflict with the civilian population. This presents grave problems to the reporter on the ground." (2)

It is clear that a gulf of misunderstanding about each others roles and requirements remains, and that the result of this is a mutual lack of trust. Sadly, there have been many occasions on which this lack of trust seems to have been justified.

Whilst all parties involved would wish for a perfect world, the nature of the three groups and, even more particularly the disparate nature of those people who comprise them, means that there will always be some friction. However, this friction can be reduced.

#### A SUMMARY OF THE PROBLEMS

Before proposing methods of approach that could alleviate the difficulties in future small wars, it is perhaps necessary to list those areas that seem to have given cause for complaint in one or more of the case studies in this paper. They are given below with minimal explanation.

- \* A lack of education about each others roles, needs, methods and limitations; especially between the military and the media.

- \* A lack of experience in war reporting amongst the media, coupled with a naivete about the nature of war itself - particularly insurgent war.
- \* A lack of effective contingency planning for the accreditation of the media, including representatives of foreign media.
- \* The media faces the pressures of deadlines and competition that may dictate that war reporting becomes less balanced and objective than is desirable.
- \* Television tends to demand the sensational rather than the mundane.
- \* There have never been effective policy guidelines over matters of taste and thus the whole question of the sanitization of war remains contentious and unresolved.
- \* Many military and government press officers lack credibility with the media, and are thus unable to do their tasks effectively.

- \* In unsophisticated operational areas provision must be made for the media to have reasonable access to transmission facilities. In the Falklands and Grenada the military controlled such facilities and media access to them was totally inadequate.
- \* Too often governments have confused policies over information handling, with one rule for the military and the media, and another, totally flexible rule for themselves, especially if political or diplomatic advantage seems possible by changing the rules.
- \* The use of expert analysts to comment upon current military operations and predict future ones is potentially dangerous.
- \* Governments and the military must be aware that the media will always seek out information from any source - even the enemy - if it is not readily available to them through official domestic agencies.
- \* Governments are frequently guilty of using the media for disinformation in order to further their cause. Once discovered the resultant loss of credibility is hard to recover.

- \* Some censorship, if only by time, maybe necessary to safeguard military operations.
- \* Technological advances are likely to create major changes in the way in which war correspondents conduct their business. Complete censorship may be an unattainable goal in future.

#### REMEDIAL ACTION

There is no simple solution to any or all of these problems. If there was, they would not still exist. Numerous inquiries, studies and symposia have followed each of the small wars examined in this paper, and recommendations have been made as a result. The problems experienced in the Falklands and Grenada show how little has really been learned. Although there is no simple remedy, there are things that can be done to improve matters. Some are simply procedural, whilst others are more complicated and long term.

The first and over-riding requirement is for better, continual education within the military and the media about each other. Of course the military already conduct a limited amount of such training but, that tends to be aimed at giving leaders confidence in facing media interviews, rather than in helping them to really understand the nature of the media. Media training should become an essential part of the curriculum at all service schools where leaders and potential leaders are

trained. The process cannot simply be one way. The media or at least those who are likely to deal with the military, need to be properly educated about the military and about the nature of war. The attendance of media representatives on exercises, training deployments and study days can only help with this process. Further advantage would be gained if newspaper and broadcasting companies pre-selected those of their staffs who are destined to become war correspondents and commentators in the event of conflict. Their education should be a priority. In such a way the problems that were experienced in Vietnam and the Falklands, due to the naivete of some correspondents, and the resultant intolerance of some of the military, would be overcome. Government and military press officers need to be directly involved in this education process and they must be carefully selected to ensure that their background experience will afford them credibility with the media. If this educational process works properly, there will inevitably be a growth in understanding between all parties and that can only lead to greater trust, both on a personal and general level. All three groups must beware of mavericks within their own ranks and be prepared to deal with them ruthlessly.

On a procedural basis, the military must make sensible provision for media participation in their operations. Contingency plans must include the potential for deploying with the media representatives, even if such plans have to be adjusted in light of actual circumstances. Any such

adjustments should be directed, and explained by the government. The media should be responsible for selecting, and shadow nominating, their representatives, and provision must be made for foreign representation. The Pentagon Press Pool, instituted after Grenada, worked well in the Persian Gulf and, whilst not being perfect, it solved a number of issues, leaving all parties satisfied. It is a system that bears further trial and seems to offer an acceptable solution to many of the problems of accreditation, media access and transmission facilities.

The military should plan now for providing adequate transmission facilities when the media accompany them on operations in unsophisticated theatres. It is not clear whether television film could have been transmitted back to London from the Task Force in the South Atlantic, but the media believed that it was possible and that the Royal Navy deliberately raised technical objections to thwart the proposal. There are now few technical barriers and the media will expect such support in the future.

Governments have three main tasks if the problems that have been identified are not to be perpetuated. Firstly, they must ensure that information is available to meet the reasonable demands of the media; failure to do so will antagonize them and almost certainly drive them to accept news from any source - even the enemy. If the government is reluctant to give out information for genuine reasons of security then the domestic

media must be taken into their confidence. How much they are told in the process will depend upon the trust that has been built up, the perceived strength of the government's case for security, and the integrity of the media. Secondly, governments must beware of using the media as a means of disseminating disinformation or propaganda. It may be a necessary, or at least a highly desirable, deception technique, but it should generally be used to deceive the enemy rather than the domestic media. If the government is 'caught in the act', all its subsequent communiques and briefings will be suspect. Again, candidness with the media maybe the solution.

Thirdly, the government must be consistent. It cannot temporarily change the rules for information handling to meet the needs of the moment. Nor can it follow one set of rules itself, whilst imposing others on the military and the media. Changes may be necessary but they need explanation if they are not to provoke doubts, anger, and distrust.

The final, major area that requires some change is the question of taste. Governments may wish to sanitize war so that the domestic public are not so horrified by its stark reality that they withdraw their support for its continued prosecution. They will certainly wish to minimize the suffering of families of any casualties of the conflict. On the other hand, the press and broadcasting companies will be seeking stories, films and photographs that give them a competitive edge over their

rivals. The sensational is always a temptation. Government regulation does not seem to provide a practical solution to this problem and, in the past, the media have generally been responsible in this matter. Many correspondents, photographers and editors have followed their own, self-imposed guidelines. General guidelines from government would be helpful, with the media taking corrective action against any of their representatives who over-step the line of acceptability.

It will be clear that the majority of these proposals rely upon goodwill, mutual trust and self-regulation. As such they presume that everyone involved will adhere to the guidelines and will broadly follow similar ethical principles. The best way to ensure that this happens is through education and through increased knowledge between the groups of each other as individuals.

It will not always work. There will be disagreements and misunderstandings, but, given a genuine desire for improvement from all those involved, these few outline remedies will help. During the Parliamentary Inquiry following the Falklands conflict, Sir Frank Cooper was asked whether he agreed with Archibald Forbes, a distinguished Victorian war correspondent who confessed:

“‘Were I a general, and had I an independent command in war offered me, I should accept it only on the condition that I should have the charter to shoot every war correspondent within fifty miles of my headquarters.’

(Sir Frank Cooper replied) 'No, I think that whether you like it or not, you have got to live with the real facts of life. The fact is that we shall now have war correspondents in one way or another. What we have got to do is to find a way in which they and whoever is doing the fighting can find some reasonable way of living together. It is a very difficult thing to find. I think that after every war anywhere or any kind of hostilities, you are going to have arguments, discussions, questions; and I am not sure that any of us are ever going to reach a final conclusion. I suspect it is a perennial subject, quite frankly'" (3)

#### ENDNOTES

1. Alan Hooper, The Military and the Media, p. 219.
2. Ibid., p. 204.
3. House of Commons, Defence Committee, The Handling of Press and Public Information During the Falklands Conflict, Vol II, p. 450.

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